

Notice of Allowability**Application No.**

09/990,548

Examiner

José V. Chen

Applicant(s)

WILLIAMSON ET AL.

Art Unit

3637

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--**

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to papers filed 04-14-04.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-6.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on _____ are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☒ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☒ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☐ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

José V. Chen
Primary Examiner
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EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with W. Thad Adams, III on 05-24-04.

The application has been amended as follows: Any previously presented claims have been replaced by the following:

1. A meal tray assembly, comprising:

- (a) a meal tray for being mounted for movement between a stowage position flush against a seat back surface and a lowered, horizontal use position;
- (b) a latch access port extending through the meal tray from a top side to a bottom side thereof;
- (c) a latch carried on the seat back for extending through the latch access port in the meal tray for selective engagement with the bottom side of the meal tray, said latch being mounted for movement between;
 - (i) a locking position wherein the latch engages the bottom side of the meal tray through the latch access port and thereby locks the meal tray in the stowage position against the surface; and
 - (ii) a release position wherein the latch is releasable from engagement with the bottom side of the meal tray and the latch access

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port is sized to permit movement of the meal tray away from the latch into the use position.

2. A meal tray assembly according to claim 1, wherein the latch is carried by a latch plate secured to a rear facing side of a forwardly positioned passenger seat.

3. A meal tray assembly according to claim 1, wherein the latch access port is recessed from the bottom side of the meal tray, and the latch when in its latching position is recessed below the bottom side of the meal tray for protecting the latch against disengagement during passenger movement past the stowed meal tray.

4. A meal tray assembly according to claim 1, 2, or 3, wherein:

(a) said latch access pod has a relatively long longitudinal dimension and a relatively narrow lateral dimension; and

(b) said latch has a relatively long longitudinal dimension and a relatively narrow lateral dimension configured for allowing the latch to extend through the latch access port when the longitudinal dimension of the latch access port and latch are aligned with each other and to interfere with and prevent movement of the meal tray from the stowed position when the longitudinal dimension of the latch is not aligned with the longitudinal dimension of the latch access port.

5. A meal tray assembly according to claim 4, wherein the latch access

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port is positioned adjacent a side edge of the meal tray adjacent to the user when in the use position.

6. A meal tray assembly according to claim 5, including a grommet, an annular detent plate having a flat surface and being carried by said latch plate for residing against and stabilizing an adjacent top surface of the meal tray in the stowage position.

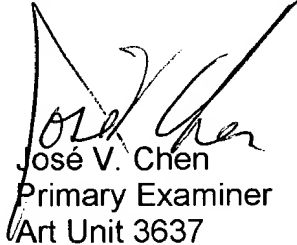
The following changes to the drawings have been approved by the examiner and agreed upon by applicant: See proposed drawing changes in the drawings filed 10-28-03. In order to avoid abandonment of the application, applicant must make these above agreed upon drawing changes.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to José V. Chen whose telephone number is (703) 308-3229. The examiner can normally be reached on m-f, m-th 5:30am-3:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lanna Mai can be reached on (703)308-2168. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



José V. Chen
Primary Examiner
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05-24-04